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CHANDLER, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Granite State Senator Periodically in the Limelight for Half a Century.

Concord, N. H., June 29.—The most unique figure in American politics to-day, excepting Theodore Roosevelt or William Jennings Bryan, is ex-Senator William E. Chandler, of New Hampshire.

There is something almost fascinating about Chandler, although there are those who dread and dislike him as they would a marplot. He has been periodically in the national limelight for a half century. In the startegy of popular politics, he is a star. His activity, his ingenuity, his acuteness, are a recurring surprise, even to those who think they understand him best. Some pronounce him a Macchiavelli; others discern in him a real genius, with a substratum of genuine statesmanship, a superstructure of skillful diplomacy and extraordinary legal acumen. His is a Damascus blade that startles, cuts to the quick, and then arouses the admiration even of the vanquished.

William E. Chandler has developed to an eminent degree the faculty of "doing things"—bright, quick, decisive things—he has taken many "A Message to Garcia." Not always the popular thing, nor invariably the politic and logical thing, but, nevertheless, an original, surprising, and generally the opportune thing. He reminds one of the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Joyett's advice—"Never retract, never explain, get the thing done, and let them howl." He believes with Beveridge, that "preparedness" is the secret of most successes; fate seldom makes league with the unequipped. He does not talk till he has something definite to say, and, when he's done, he's through. The galleries fill; friend and foe alike listen; he is sure to puncture a hole straight in the armor of his antagonist; no other man can more quickly, cutely, wittily strip a proposition of its verbiage, and get right at the crucial point, than William E. Chandler. Then he will calmly sit down, in cosy chat with his opponents, and impartially commend them for the excellent manner in which they handled themselves, for he is supreme at reconciliation, and never took time for revenge. He is an earnest, merciless, resourceful fighter, but, when the battle is over, he welcomes peace. He has wonderful foresight, the dangerous proclivity of being ahead of his party, in advance of his times.

It was this same brainy personality, sitting on the piazza at Oyster Bay, before Theodore Roosevelt himself dreamed of being even Vice President, that predicted to Mrs. Roosevelt, in her husband's presence, that the man to be named with William McKinley, on the next national Republican ticket, must be aggressive; yes, strenuous; must be of New York State; should be a Spanish war veteran, and would be—Theodore Roosevelt.

That was a startler, and both Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt arose with uplifted hands in surprise.

It was this same intrepid William E. Chandler who, at the Republican national convention, "bearded the lion in his den," permitted it to be realized by the great Marcus Alonzo Hanna, in his hotel headquarters, then the powerful chairman of the Republican national committee, in the very zenith of his sway and prestige, that the question was not whether Theodore Roosevelt should be nominated for Vice President, but whether William McKinley or Theodore Roosevelt should be nominated for President.

That was literal temerity, under the circumstances; nerve extraordinary. Hanna and McKinley feared Roosevelt's impulsiveness, and did not expect him on the ticket at all. So, the potent Republican manager turned pale, and ground his teeth at the undaunted Chandler. But, Chandler, backed by Platt and others, with varying motives, landed Roosevelt in the Vice Presidency, notwithstanding the tremedous undercurrents against him; and thus, through the instrumentality of William E. Chandler, more than any other one man, Roosevelt drifted into the Presidency.

"Did Chandler really say that?" exclaimed Roosevelt, excitedly, as reported. "That took courage indeed, the courage of a royal, loyal friend; I'll never forget it!"

When Roosevelt was an assistant secretary, and Chandler an ex-Secretary of the Navy, the younger man was glad to avail himself of the advice and experience of his more analytic predecessor in the department, and they had grown to be cordial friends; and Mr. Chandler, even after Roosevelt acceded to the White House, regarded him fondly as "one of his boys," and took pride in his popularity, his aggressiveness, and enterprise, and was ready and glad to help and stand by him, whether the project were a pet railroad-rate measure or whatever it might be. Little did Chandler anticipate that the hasty moment would come when he would be ruthlessly brushed aside, in personal impulse or political expediency, and styled a "mischief-maker," or publicly branded, of record, an "unqualified falsifier."

Now, people realize that there may be several things about which William E. Chandler has not told the whole truth, but those who know him best know that he is no liar. Many are inclined to blame Senator Lodge, Chandler's old friend, on the ground that he indiscretely and unnecessarily foited that telephonic brand into the Senate Chamber.

Chandler has had remarkable experience and association with several Presidents. Abraham Lincoln, James A. Garfied, and William McKinley, each recognized the work and worth of the man, and each deliberately appointed him to responsible office; and it so happened that each of these three Presidents was martyred. Chandler was partisan; there never was a shade of doubt on his ardent Republicanism; but he was indefatigable, able, fearless. He sat in President Arthur's cabinet, graced with the navy portfolio, and he and Arthur maintained affectionate and confidential relations; and Chandler laid the keel of the "New Navy," and was a success, as he always has been.

"Mr. Chandler," says John D. Long, ex-Secretary of the Navy, "brought to the administration of the affairs of the navy great energy and executive ability. He took hold of the situation with a firm grasp, and proceeded at once to institute such reforms as lay within the power of the Secretary of the Navy, and to make most vigorous recommendations to the Congress, in relation to those for which legislative authority was requisite."

Then, Chandler was sent from New Hampshire to the national Senate, and there had fourteen consecutive years of picturesque, assiduous, and effective service, a controlling force on various regular and special committees, dealing with all the great current problems of legislation, such as tariff, civil service, immigration, bimetallism by international agreement, &c., and at the height of his fame and usefulness, and because he was an uncompromising picket of reform, was ignominously run over, as he put it, by a big corporation "railroad train," up here in New Hampshire, and became defunctus officio. It was largely a piece of personal resentment for forcibly and persistently contending for principles that he believed to be right, and the righteousness of which is now fully dawning on the people.

Had Chandler then gone to New York and re-entered the practice of the law, he could easily have commanded a big fortune in professional fees from important interests; but President McKinley interposed to make him President of the Spanish Treaty Claims Commission, a position that he still holds, although the work is nearly complete. The commission has received claims to the amount of $62,000,000; the total awards thus far being only $700,000.

He is over seventy now, and the heyday of his blood may naturally be said to have passed, but his virility and versatility are still intact and extant, and, under more favorable conditions, with a characteristic quick dash, his re-election to the United States Senate, or to the governorship of his State, would not be the most surprising thing in his eventful career. Just now he is the advisory counsel for the "next friends," plaintiffs in the famous equity suit involving Mary Baker G. Eddy and Christian Science interests.

When President McKinley appointed Chandler to the Spanish Treaty Claims Commission, it was a surprise to Chandler himself.

"What I require," said William McKinley, in substance, to William E. Chandler, "is, first, an absolutely honest, unswerving man; second, a keen, able, experienced lawyer; third, one capable of dealing with international problems, and thoroughly acquainted with the machinery and policies of our own government; fourth, an accredited Republican. Whom do you, Mr. Chandler, recommend for such a responsible place, that may involve the question of millions?"

For once in his lifetime the ever-ready Chandler was nonplused; he didn't know whom to suggest.

"Well," resumed President McKinley, in that characteristically gracious manner that he had, "I have picked the man, and you, Mr. Chandler, are the one." Then the President alluded to his own personal feelings on the subject.

Now, William E. Chandler is sometimes imagined to be a seared veteran of occasions, with callous heart; but the tears for a moment came into his eyes, like those of a child, when that revered man spoke those words. And Chandler, let it be said, has faithfully, diligently, conscientiously kept the trust, fulfilled the important mission.

Yes; this same irrepressible William E. Chandler did have some historic connection with one Mr. Rutherford B. Hayes. Chandler "stole Florida," or something of that kind, and hung up a "chromo President" in the White House. It sounds a trifle harsh to say that Chandler "stole" the State, but he was ardently partisan, and probably gave the Republican cause, after the manner of a jury, the benefit of any reasonable doubt.

Hayes was profoundly thankful, and wished to reward Chandler as he did others, offering to make him envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Constantinople, but Chandler would not stand for "Turkey," and Madrid was not available, and, besides, he was irreconcilably mad at Hayes for having "sold out" unjustly and unnecessarily the State governments of Louisiana and Florida, the local tickets having, in his opinion, been more strongly elected, if at all, than the electoral ticket. Chandler declared that Hayes created more doubt as to the justice of the Electoral Commission by his refusal to uphold and maintain the Republicans in those two States than could have been created in any other way. He was counsel before the Electoral Commission, and subsequently proceeded with great force and plausibility, in the public print and otherwise, to make Hayes' stay in the White House very unhappy. The Republican State convention of New Hampshire refused, at Chandler's instance, to indorse the national administration, after a turbulent and most memorable session of the State committee the night before.

At the time of the Hayes-Tilden popular election, Senator Zachariah Chandler was chairman of the national committee, of which William E. was the New Hampshire member. The two men were much alike in fighting qualities, though of no blood relation. On the day of the election, William E. voted here in Concord; early the next morning, he was at the headquarters in New York, but the national executive committee had given up the fight, and closed its doors. John C. Reid, of the New York Times, met him, showed him certain dispatches received from the South, whereupon William E. hunted up "Old Zach," who was abed, and sent out interviews and other dispatches, claiming 185 electoral votes for Hayes, and that he was elected.

Upon his arrival at New York, at about 3 o'clock, in the gray dawn after election, William E. Chandler, accompanied by Mr. Reid, wrote and signed with his own name the dispatches to Oregon and to Gorman, of San Francisco. To the dispatches sent Conover, Packard, and Chamberlain, he signed either his own name or that of Zachariah Chandler.

The first telegram was to Gov. D. H. Chamberlain, South Carolina, as follows:

"Hayes is elected, if we have carried South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana. Can you hold your State? Answer immediately."

Another message, as follows, was wired to S. B. Conover, Tallahassee, Florida:

"The Presidential election depends on the vote of Florida, and the Democrats will try to wrest it from us. Watch it, and hasten returns. Answer immediately. Hayes defeated without Florida. Do not be cheated in returns. Answer when sure."

To S. B. Packard, of Louisiana, the following dispatch was sent:

"The Presidential election depends on the vote of Louisiana, and the Democrats will try to wrest it from you."

That the Tilden and Hendricks ticket was entitled to 184 electoral votes was undisputed. That the Hayes and Wheeler ticket was entitled to 165 electoral votes was also undisputed. There were 369 electors in all. The Tilden ticket, therefore, needed only one more to give it the majority required for an election. The Hayes ticket, having only 166 electoral votes assured, required nineteen votes more to insure election.

The four votes of Florida, the eight of Louisiana, and seven of South Carolina made just nineteen. To get one of these votes was sufficient to elect Tilden and Hendricks. To elect Hayes and Wheeler it was necessary to get the whole nineteen.

The New York Times caught William E. Chandler's inspiration, and reverberated the spirit of the Chandler dispatches in scare headlines, "The Battle Won," &c., being the first, and, for a time, the only newspaper to express serious doubt of Tilden's election, and had it not been for William E. Chandler the question of the election would never have been raised. The subsequent figuring of Thomas J. Brady, with a force of special agents; of William A. Cook, and the others, is known, but it was "Bill" Chandler, described in the South as "the man with the immense pair of goggles," who seized upon the "psychological moment," and the fire once started, it spread as a conflagration throughout the United States.

Chandler was off for Florida. It was a wonder that his life was not taken. Then followed the urgent cipher telegraphing to and from, the sending of needed money for "counsel" and other "help," and the long train of incidents in that exciting and protracted epoch of our national history; and William E. Chandler, the most eminent son of New Hampshire since the days of Daniel Webster, will, justly or unjustly, go down to posterity as "The Man Who Stole Florida."

Mr. Chandler was recognized throughout his Senatorial service, and, indeed, has been since the days of Charles Sumner, as "Marsa" Chandler, the champion of the rights of the colored race, and the enthusiastic ovations of respect and devotion given him from time to time, especially by the colored people of the city of Washington, have been marked expressions of the high appreciation and respect in which he is so generally held. For them to know that he was recognized and accredited as the "friend of Abraham Lincoln," and that he has stood stanchly by them, through emancipation, uplifting, and equal rights, has won their hearts.

Chandler has counted so much in popular history, been so intertwined with the great current of important events, that it is hard to compress into outline the dramatic and almost tragic story of such a pivotal and essential life.

He was born at Concord, N. H., December 28, 1835; received a common school education; studied law in Concord and at Harvard law school, from which he was graduated in 1855; admitted to the bar the same year. Like "Ben" Harrison, he began his active career as a State Supreme Court reporter, publishing as such five valuable volumes; became earnestly engaged in politics and associated with the Republican party, serving as secretary and afterward as chairman of the New Hampshire Republican State Committee. In 1862 he was elected to the New Hampshire House of Representatives, of which he was speaker for two successive terms, in 1863-4. In November, 1864, he was employed by the Navy Department as special counsel to prosecute the Philadelphia navy yard frauds. On March 9, 1865, he was appointed first solicitor and judge advocate general of the Navy Department; on

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Map of WILLIAM E. CHANDLER'S Life

1835—Home life, Concord, N. H.
School life.
Law study at home.
Law study at Cambridge Law School.
1855—Law practice at Concord.
Political life in New Hampshire.
1864—Navy and Treasury Departments, Washington.
1867—Law practice, Washington.
Political life, national committee.
1882—Navy Department.
1887—United States Senate.
1901—Spanish Treaty Claims Commission.
1906—Roosevelt-Chandler-Tillman Incident.

EX-SENATOR WILLIAM E. CHANDLER.